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M.A.C.E. JOURNAL

"Devoted Exclusively To The Atari Computer User"

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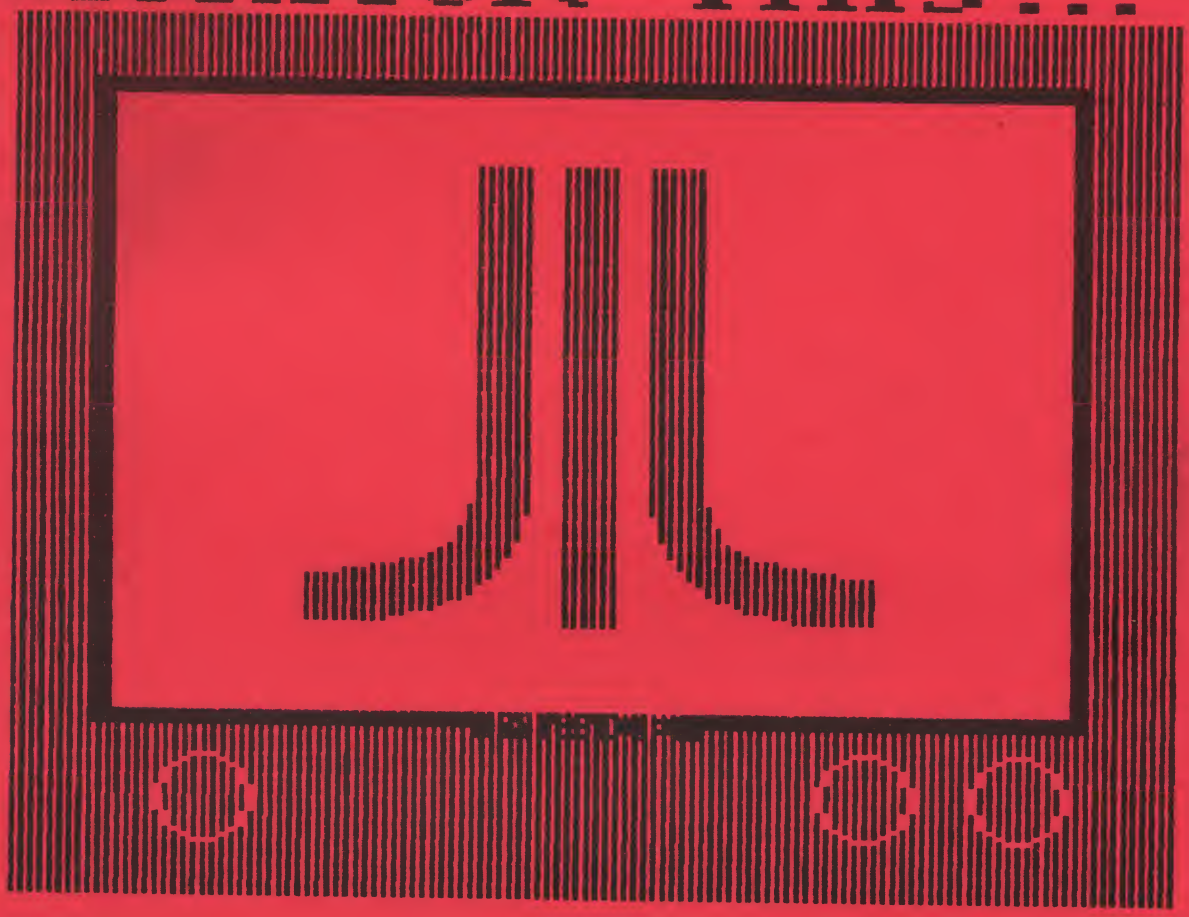

IN THIS ISSUE...

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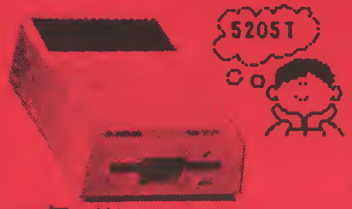

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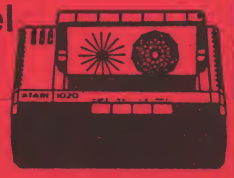
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The Editor Speaks

by Mike Lechkun

Well, it seems I'm back in the saddle again. As you know, the former editor went on to pursue other interests. And when faced with an opening at a crucial position in MACE, I had a few ideas on how the Journal should be done, and decided to run for the position. That now officially makes me a living, breathing, dyed-in-the-wool Atari nut for the next year!

My qualifications for this position are as follows: my three years of involvement in MACE, exposure to the Atari community on a national front, and my work on Journal's past with such notables as Fred Parr, Marshall Dubin, and Ann McBain Ezzell. Although not a computer professional as many of you are, I have worked as a mainframe operator in the past (anyone out there hiring?). I also have a minor in English from Eastern Michigan which I am not using at this time, either. So much for my qualifications; what about the Journal?

I would like to explore different areas of the "Atari Experience" in each issue of the Journal. This month's theme is MONITORS. Below is a list of subjects I'd like to concentrate on in future issues. But I will need your help. Why?

In the past, the MACE Journal has been the complete product of one or two individuals; usually the editor and the president or vice-prez. This is an incredible burden for so few to bear. I must gather articles, write when none are to be found, assemble and gather ads, do layout and artwork, deliver finished copy to the printer, pick-up and deliver finished product to the meeting, sort out and mail out to those who didn't come to the meeting, and finally, start the whole thing over again for next month! That is why I wish to assemble a staff of contributing editors and other support help to work with me on the Journal. With the MACE-Warren BBS, a 45-hour a week job and a family of four, it is unfair to these for me to be anything else but the managing editor.

Contributing editors will contribute to the content of the Journal by writing articles on a bi-monthly basis. They will also make contact with other authors and channel their works towards the Journal. I would like contributing editors in the following positions:

- Basic (including at least one program listing each month)
- Business (filled)
- Games
- Graphics and Sound
- Hardware
- Languages (other than basic)
- Telecommunications

By having expertise available in these areas will greatly add to the "Atari Experience". It will make this newsletter a magazine.

I am also looking for help in mailing the newsletters. We had a problem in November of '83 with the Southfield Post Office losing our entire U.S. mailing. So the account was transferred to Sterling Heights, closer to my home. We need an "eastsider" to offer to take the leftover Journals home, sort them to postal regulations, and take them to the P.O. to be mailed. This takes about 2-3 hours and can be easily done while the kids are watching cartoons on Saturday morning!

To make a short story long, this is your Journal. I can't write every other article each month like previous editors have done. It is a user's journal by users, not by a couple of individuals. There's no monitary pay for articles, although we still payoff in your choice of a disk from the library, as well as the fame that comes from seeing your name in print. If you don't think you can write, well, let us editors be the judges. I'll bet a box of unformatted disks you can!!

You may contact me by mail, through the MACE-Warren BBS, or in person at the meetings. Please help out with our Journal by volunteering your services, by the next deadline, December 6th. It's only what we make it, so why not make it the best?

Future Journal Topics:
Jan - Atari Magazines
Feb - CES Reviews/New Atari products
Mar - Modem madness
Apr - The ST a year later

May - Printers
Jun - Disk Drives and DOS
Jul - Games! Games! Games!
Aug - Graphics
Sep - Music and Sound
Oct - Programming

MINDSTORMS
by Seymour Papert

Reviewed by Bob Pettapiece

For those of you who have not read the "First Book of LOGO" by the man who lead the development of the programming language, I highly recommend it. However, let us first be clear what the book is about. Yes, the book discusses LOGO and its uses. It even has a few sample programs. However, these programs and discussion are much more meaningful after you have learned LOGO from another source. The discussions in Papert's book point to more powerful ideas.

One of the ideas Papert points to is the mathematical and other learnings that LOGO supports. Kids (and grownups) can have fun exploring geometry and poetry with LOGO as well as learning to program without line numbers.

The most powerful idea Papert discusses in his book is the nature of learning. The idea of LOGO is to explore the computer as a workplace and to have the learner control the computer through the turtle which goes where you tell it on the screen and draws what you command. Through exploring one is expected to make mistakes and to probe for an answer that works (debugging). In essence, Papert is saying learning is done through exploring and making mistakes.

In as much as Papert does not require a strong background in math to enjoy LOGO, it would be helpful to read certain sections of his book. However, even for the mathophobic, this is an excellent book on the process of learning and I highly recommend it.

MACE GROUP PURCHASE

Look what we've got for you this month! The chance to upgrade that old Atari 400 to the new, sleekly styled Atari 130 XE. Send us $138, and give the good ol' 400 to the kids.

Also this month we're offering the SmarTEAM 103/212A 300-1200 baud modem for the low low price of $205. This one look like a Hayes (sort of), acts like a Hayes (100%), and, who knows? It just may be better than a Hayes (Hayes is a registered trademark). See the review in this issue of the Journal for more info.

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Commodore Amiga vs Atari ST
First Impressions

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The following is NOT a review of the Amiga A-1000. It is a first impression of this machine, after having spent a day or so with it. It is also a comparison with the Atari 520ST, its most logical competitor. So that noone feels left out I'll also throw in some gratuitous comments on the Mac by way of comparison, (how to make LOTS of enemies).

The full specifications for both machines have been published now and initial reviews have appeared in the magazines. It is not my intention to do a side by side technical comparison. Anyone who wishes to do this can do so on their own, based on the published specs.

I am writing this then from the point of view of a consumer who might be lucky enough to bring home one of each to examine and play with for a day. I've had an ST around for a couple of months and have become familiar with it, but to this date, just as everyone else, haven't a single piece of application software (other than our developmental prototypes). The Amiga that I received does not come with any applications software (though the production versions will) and thus I'm pretty much in the same boat with both machines; able to play with the desktops and examine the development environment but not do anythting productive or useful. I'm going to be getting samples of all the early software next week, but comparing them without application software seems an appropriate and fair thing to do at this early stage in the lives of both machines and in some ways helps prevent the clouding of features by a particularly strong piece of software on one or the other.

I also want to stress that my perspective on these computers is that of someone who would primarily use them in a personal productivity environment. These are not in my opinion "home" computers (whatever they are) and they are obvioulsy not destined for the desks of corporate users in the Fortune 1000 companies. These are machines for the likes of you and I to use to do real world tasks; writing, filing, calculating, communicating and recreation and that will be the perspective of this piece. If you are approaching these machines from any other perspective then be warned that we differ.

First some caveats and disclosures. Though I am V.P. of Product Development for Batteries Included (BI) the following observations and opinions are my own and not those of BI. BI has a vested interest in the success of both computer systems as we currently have products under development for both of them.

I've been a long time Atari enthusiast, but on the other hand, I have followed the Amiga for over two years, since it was first shown behind closed doors to a few industry insiders as a collection of circuit boards being run by a mini under the table. I've lusted after one since, and followed the product's development very closely.

So with that out of the way, here goes. Remember! This isn't a technical analysis, it's a user at home playing with the machines and trying to draw some comparisons and conclusions.

Keyboard first. I like the Amiga's keyboard a great deal. In fact I would rate it as the second nicest keyboard I've ever used. Since I'm not a touch typist the exact position of keys doesn't concern me. I use so many different ones that the odd displacement is less disconcerting than poor tactile feedback, which on the Amiga is very good. The ST by comparison is acceptable but not quite as crisp. As a fairly fast two finger typist I find both quite acceptable.

The RETURN key is large and well placed and the FUNCTION keys well separated (which is one thing I'll quibble about on the ST). The ST keyboard, while not having quite as good a feel, is a direct copy of the DEC VT200 keyboard in terms of layout and thus will

appeal to many. Of course the ST is a one piece unit; the keyboard and computer are one while the Amiga has a detachable keyboard that connects through a telephone cable with modular jacks. If you're the type of user that likes to type with the keyboard on your lap then the Amiga will be prefered. Both the ST and the Amiga blow the Mac away when it comes to keyboards, by the way. The Mac simply doesn't have enough keys and I find it's angle uncomfortable.

Drives second. Both machines use the new 3.5" microfloppies and I love them. If I never see another 5 1/4" diskette it won't be too soon! I can't wait for the PC2 which will have them as well so that the rest of the industry is forced to make the switch.

The Amiga's drives are very high density, double sided, 880K formatted. The ST's that are shipping now are single sided 360K formatted. Supposedly Atari is to ship their double sided drives shortly. They'll be 720K formatted. A little smaller in capacity than the Amiga's, but in the same ballpark. This is REAL storage capacity folks, on either machine.

One curious thing is that the Amiga's drives seem to be running all the time. They are "almost" silent but an occasional 'clunk' can be heard that indicates that they are spinning. This doesn't bother me one way or the other since many system's drives are always 'on'. I don't think any conclusions regarding longevity or reliability can be drawn at this point. The Mac uses 360K formatted disks as well, so it is comparable to the ST. Most PC and Mac owners are starting to bemoan their small disk capacity so I think ST owners with single sided drives will end up feeling the same way. Apple supposedly has double sided drives on the way this fall and it's also likely than when IBM embraces 3.5" disks they'll be 720K or better as well.

The Amiga can accept a second outboard drive as can the ST. The Amiga's though doesn't need a separate power supply as it gets its juice from the system unit. Any additional drives must have a separate power supply though. AmigaDOS can address up to four external drives while the ST can address two as well as a hard disk.

Cosmetics: The Amiga isn't pretty but neither is the ST. The Mindset was pretty, but look where it got them. All in all I wouldn't choose either machine based on their cosmetics, both are very acceptable for either home or office. The Amiga's footprint is a bit larger but the keyboard slides under the system unit for storage and the monitor can sit on top of it (to a maximum of 40 lbs worth). The Mac is positivly ugly (in my opinion) by comparison.

Mice: Both machines come with rodents of the two button variety. There isn't much to choose between them. I have found the ST mouse's buttons to not be quite as crisp as I would like but that may just be the couple that I've used. While the ST has a two button mouse, GEM doesn't require the use of two buttons. Intuition does. The left button selects while the right button displays menu bars. I'm not crazy about this; in fact I dislike it! You thus have to keep the right button depressed while clicking on the menu item from the drop down with the left button. It's not easy (although I suppose I'll get used to it) and I much prefer the ST-GEM method! Non-GEM ST software can and will use the second button though so it isn't redundant.

Surprise. The Amiga has a fan, (Steve Jobs would have hated it). I would have as well except that it's without a doubt the quietest fan I've ever heard (not heard?) on a computer. I have a PC clone on my desk at work which has a fan so loud as to sometimes interfere with conversations. Most PCs are similarly loud. The Amiga's fan is totally inaudable even in a quiet home so no one should be bothered by it. The ST on the other hand does not have a fan and thus is obviously quieter still. The ST's drives don't spin all the time either, so all in all for someone who is neurotic about noise, the ST is preferable. Whether the fan will contribute to the Amiga's longevity remains to be seen. The Mac doesn't have a fan either, but I am told that the next generation modular Mac will.

Sound: The Amiga's sound capabilities are superb. It also has voice synthesis built in which is very intelligable. The ST's sound capabilities are alright but not in the same league. For games and music software applications the Amiga will shine. When it comes to personal productivity applications music is almost irrelevant. The Amiga has

stereo audio output and users can anticipate some exciting software that utilizes this capability. The ST though has a direct MIDI connection built in. I personally wouldn't buy one or the other simply on the basis of sound so I'm probably not the best person to comment on this.

Graphics: The Amiga defines the state of the art in affordable graphics capabilities. I won't get into the details since they've been detailed in print elsewhere (Issue #1 of Amigaworld; Creative Computing and Byte September issues for the Amiga and recent Antic's and ANALOG's for the ST). Cost aside for the moment, if graphics are your "thing" then the Amiga is superior to every other computer currently on the market or yet announced.

Now that there are Amiga's on dealers shelves [there are? --ed.] there is discussion regarding the ST's versus the Amiga's text display on their respective RGB monitors. At the desktop (Workbench) level, both machines are in 640X200 4 color mode. There appears to be some significant difference between the displays with the Atari color display looking crisper and easier to read text.

It is too soon to declare definitively what causes this but it may be in part that the Amiga's screen is quite a bit larger than that of the Atari monitor and thus one is able to more clearly see the the black inter-scan line stripes which reduces apparent resolution. Also, the Atari's font seems somewhat more pleasing to the eye.

One clear advantage that the Atari ST has is in its high-res monochrome mode, 640X360. This mode is incredibly crisp and readable, ideal for serious word processing and other long session uses. A separate special Atari monochrome monitor is required to use this mode but it is every bit as good if not better than the IBM PC's monochrome text mode or that of the Macintosh. The Amiga doesn't have any similar mode and this is a definite drawback for serious text applications. Many people with IBM type color displays (the same resolution as the medium res Atari and the Amiga) find it difficult to work all day at that resolution and end up getting monochrome cards for text work.

Now for the counterpoint. I don't know about you but I'm not able to spend from $1,000 to $2,000 or more (depending on system and options) on a game machine. Sure I like to play games, but I don't think that's the raison d'etre for either machine. It would be facile and unfair though to simply latch onto the Amiga's superior animation-graphics and sound and dismiss the ST. The financial part of the equation is significant and will be disussed in detail at the end of this piece, but it is a major consideration.

The graphics on the ST are not shabby by any means (I know first hand because we have a graphics program for the ST under development that really makes it shine). The bottom line? The Amiga is the winner in terms of graphics and sound without regard to price. How important this is is up to each user to decide. The 520ST is the clear winner for displaying text but the user must buy a second monitor or forsake color. The Mac doesn't have color capability (yet) so isn't in the same league. Monochrome (hi-res) graphics on the ST are as good if not better resolution than the Mac as well.

User Interface: This is a tough one. I like GEM very much. It is very close to the Mac in style and manner of use. In fact, in some areas GEM has features preferable to those on the Mac; variable size scroll boxes for example and the upper right sizing button.

Intuition on the Amiga is quite similar in style to GEM and the Mac. It has windows with scroll bars, a close button and several other "gadgets" are available. In many ways though it is quite different. For example on the Mac and ST-GEM, if you have a number of windows on screen you simply click on any visible part of a window to both bring it to the front and make it the active window. On the Amiga clicking anywhere in a window makes it the active window but does not top it (bring it to the top of a multi-window display). To do that you need to click on one of the upper boxes in the upper right hand corner of each window that places a window in foreground or background. I can't say that I like this method.

Otherwise Intuition is very Mac-GEM like. Close and size boxes are where you'd expect them; windows are dragged in a similar

manner, there's even a Trash can and Preferences (control panel) window for mouse, screen and keyboard settings. Once you know how to use any one of these systems (Mac-GEM-Intuition) you'll be able to use any of the others without a hitch. Finally (!) there is now virtually a standard user interface for microcomputers.

One thing that I've noticed is that the Amiga does disk IO every time that you change something on the Workbench (Desktop). Thus it is more akin to the Mac than GEM in it needs to talk to the drive frequently. Disk IO speed though seems to be extremely fast, about the same as the ST though I've not run any speed comparisons. Subjectivly they seem to be about the same and both appear to be much faster than the Mac.

One area where the Amiga is different is that besides having windows it has Screens. Unlike a Window, a Screen must be the full width of the display. Screens allow the Amiga to display different tasks in different resolutions. You can thus have one part of the screen in low-res multi-color mode playing a game while the bottom half is in hi-res running a word processor. A very nice capability indeed which brings us to multitasking.

The Amiga is a true multitasking computer. That means that it can run several separate tasks or programs simultaneously. For example, you're on-line on CompuServe on a conference. This can be quite boring, waiting for the other folks to type their thoughts. So, open a second Window and call up a game thus allowing you to play Cosmic Froggy Space Zapper during the dull moments. Just got a bright idea for that report due tomorrow morning? Open a third window for your word processor and write your report with the game and telecommunication conference running simultaneously.

This isn't the same thing as a desk accessory or a program like Sidekick. ALL of the programs are actually running at the same time, not just standing by on-screen. For me, this multitasking capability is the most exciting aspect of the Amiga and the one that means the most to me. I can barely walk and chew gum at the same time but there are many instances where I want to be able to run a couple of programs simultanioulsy (reply to E-mail while doing a compile, that sort of thing).

What about multitasking on the ST? Right now the ST can't do it but there is no reason why it shouldn't be able to. Multitasking is a result of the operating system used in the Amiga, not the hardware. Though I have no information to this effect, I wouldn't be surprised if Digital Reseach is considering or even working on a Concurrent GEM. They are working on Concurrent DOS 286 and since GEM is a key product for them marrying the two can't be far from their minds, particularly considering the threat of Topview and Windows.

Also Metacomco, the folks in England responsible for the multitasking Amiga OS, are known for the ease with which they are able to port their products to other machines. While the ST then doesn't have multitasking today, there's no real reason why it shouldn't at some time in the future.

Is multitasking worth the money for you? Only you can decide. The need for it is very much determined by the type of work you do and your work habits. I happen to find it a very exciting and useful capability. The Mac by the way is not multitasking and I've heard no rumors about Apple having such a capability in the near term.

An operating system is more than icons and windows. On the Atari ST (at least the machines that are currently being shipped to users) there is no way for the user to directly address TOS. All DOS commands must go through the GEM visual interface. Developers have received a Command processor and thus can access TOS directly. On the Amiga you open what is called a CLI, or Command Line Interpreter which then allows you to directly talk to AmigaDOS. A brief look at the DOS commands show it to be extremely powerful. But one apparent drawback is that all utilities appear to be disk based rather than RAM based. Thus you must have a DOS disk present all all times.

TOS is also a very competent operating system; based on CP/M 68K. Both of these are large, dense and difficult to learn and use, so in many ways the visual interfaces of GEM

and Intuition are a godsend. I hope that Atari sees fit to include their command interpreter with the ST in future as many serious users will miss having it.

Cost: The final frontier. This is what separates dreams from ownership. The equation is complex because of the number of variables and what comes with what machine. A 520ST has 512K of RAM but loses half of it to TOS/GEM needing to be booted off disk. When Atari finally ships the OS ROMS this will change but today a 520ST is really only a 256K machine.

The Amiga is at base level a 256K machine but one can buy a 256K board that plugs into a slot in the front giving you a 512K machine. Like Atari with the ST, the Amiga isn't ready yet to have its operating system ROMed. Commodore's approach though is to include what they call a Writeable Control Store; a hidden internal 256K board containing RAM into which the DOS and Intuition load. The user thus doesn't lose any RAM. On the other hand, Commodore has said that they have no intention of providing ROMS when they finally come out and early Amiga owners apparently will have to boot the "Kickstart" disk forevermore. The pre-release Amiga with 512K, by the way, shows 374,944 bytes free. Where 125K bytes have gone isn't immediately clear.

How ever you slice it, list price to list price with comparable displays, drives and monitors a 512K Amiga A-1000 with one drive and color monitor is almost twice the price of a comparably equiped Atari 520ST. Reportedly the Amiga will come with more bundled software, but then Atari has promised other software will be bundled as well. History has shown that bundled software is seldom the best, though end users usually end up purchasing the better software from independant developers. Conclusion? The Amiga is more expensive than the ST. I'll leave it to others to determine by exactly how much more. This also doesn't figure in discounts which will vary widely.

What that brings us to is the ultimate question (after the meaning of life, of course), which is, should I buy an Amiga or an ST? I know you're going to say "cop-out", but there is no one simple answer. Like your father used to say, "it depends".

The question of software availability aside for the moment; if money is no object, you'd probably buy the Amiga. But, only if serious and extended text display wasn't something important to you. Even without money as a consideration, the text display on the ST with the hi-res monochrome display is so good that it's a hands down winner in my book.

For color-animation, graphics and sound the Amiga clearly wins its turn. Even the most ardent Atari enthusiast will have to agree that the Amiga's three co-processors make it the pre-eminant graphics machine. The tradeoffs for this are price and the lack of a hi-res text mode.

The two remaining questions are corporate survival and software availability. Without software in both quantity and quality, no computer is worth having. Right now I may be regarded as lucky to have access to these two exciting new computers but I can't write this report on either as I don't have a word processor; I can't calculate their potential sales as I don't have a spreadsheet and in fact can't do a single useful thing with either.

Not fair you say? The Amiga will ship later in September with some basic productivity software and the first releases for the ST are also due. OK, but until there is sufficient software neither the ST nor the Amiga are anything more than pretty chunks of plastic and silicon. It took the Mac almost a year before there was sufficient quality software to make it a viable productivity tool. If no one ever wrote another piece of Mac software again the Macintosh would continue to be a useful computer. It may take at least a year until the same can be said for the ST and the Amiga.

What about the survivability of both Atari and Commodore. CBM's ills are well known. The C64 market is flat and they need the C128 and Amiga to be strong successes. Sales of eight bit Atari's aren't anything to write home about either but Atari pulled in its spending horns a long time ago and is lean enough (so we're told) to survive this period.

Whether the Amiga A-1000 and Atari 520ST sell enough to lift both the marketplace and

Commodore and Atari out of the doldrums still remains to be seen. Initial ST shipments appear to be selling well but clearly these sales must be to "early adopters" and closet software developers. Why would anyone buy such a machine with no software to run on it?

As this is being written in early September the Amiga has not yet shipped. Certainly when it does (supposedly later this month) many people will rush to buy it just as they did to snap up the first ST's. The real question becomes, after the initial "feeding frenzy" will there be sales to a broader base of more discriminating users? That remains to be seen, but the industry as a whole remains cautious. I for one am very confident that these two exciting micros will help to revitalize a lagging industry. Color me bullish.

The "bottom line"? I really like the Amiga and the ST both. Each has it's strengths and weaknesses. If anyone tells you otherwise, he's lying. Clearly the A-1000 is not the ultimate Amiga nor is the 520ST the final ST. Both companies will be looking to push outwards in terms of both price and features; in both directions. Who's the benaficiary? You and I and all computer users.

If someone asks the question then, "which is better, the ST or the Amiga?", simply answer, "what's your budget and what do you want to do with it?" As for me, I'm waiting till they have models with 2 MEG of RAM in a lap-top design with color LCD display, 20 MEG 3.5" hard disk and all weighing less than 10 lbs. But on the other hand...

MODEL 1702 COLOR MONITOR
by Commodore

A Review by Moe Demming

Your first reaction is probably one of shock. Imagine, a Commodore product reviewed in these hallowed Atari pages. But this monitor is the definative Atari monitor. Not that much of a contradiction, when you consider that Jack Tramiel now owns Atari, eh?

This monitor was one of the first for home computers that comes with both a standard video/audio input and an audio/chroma/luma input. For me, this is fantastic. I have used the video/audio input as a monitor for my video taping sessions, and use the audio/chroma/luma input for my Atari. A rear mounted switch allows for switching between the two.

The reason the 1702 is the definative monitor in my opinion is because of the chroma/luma option. The Atari splits off these signals for monitor use, so why not use them? If Atari had introduced a monitor in their early product lines, it would probably have had the chroma/luma option. As it is, I never question the colors portrayed on my monitor.

The controls are hidden by a door that lowers to reveal them. Only the signal select switch is in the rear. This switch controls which input you wish to use...video/audio is in front, the computer input is in the rear. Tint, color, bright, contrast, horizontal position, vertical hold and volume are all up front and easy to get at. Also the power button protrudes for easy access, and a power-on indicator is also up front. I like that because when the computer is off and the monitor is on, you don't see raster like on a television set. Just a dark screen. A handy reminder to power-down when finished.

My only gripe is that the speaker is on top and points up. Seeing I have my computer in the basement and do much of my computing at night when the kids are asleep, that just points the sound straight up. I keep a cover over the speaker and that cuts the sound a little. A side mounting of the speaker would have been better in my case.

This monitor used to be around $250 in price (like when I bought it). Now it can be found in the $175-$200 range. It is a worthwhile investment in a computer as good as the Atari. I even understand that Commodore's look good on it as well...

MACE Unclassifieds

MACE unclassifieds may be placed in the Journal by any current MACE member. There is no charge for the service. Present your ads in person to Mike Lechkun or Mike Mitchell, or upload them to the MACE-Warren BBS (978-1685).

FOR SALE: Atari 800 (48K), 410 Program Recorder, 810 Disk Drive, Basic Cartridge and other software. Purchased for $1650; now asking $96.00. Call Richard Staff @ 682-4827

FOR SALE: POPCOM X100 modem for sale. 300/1200 BPS, 101% Hayes compatible, external RS-232. New, in box, with two year warranty - $199 Call Arlan @ 399-6964 (local buyer only).

WANTED: One eastsider to help with advertising in the MACE Journal. If interested, contact Mike Mitchell @ 425-4367.

PLEASE NOTE:

When you call a manufacturer or retailer about a product or service you have seen advertised in the Journal, please tell them so. This will help us to continue to bring you the latest information on software and hardware that will make your Atari computer an even more valuable investment to you in the future.

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THE FORMATTER

by Mike Mitchell

After talking to other computer enthusiasts at the M.A.C.E. meeting and at the new user forum, I have found that most people like to format their blank disk as soon as they get them. This is fine, but to do this from DOS can take some time. So, to help you and the others save time, I wrote this single keystroke formatter program.

This basic program, when loaded, will automatically reconfigure your system to work with four drives. This is done by changing memory location 1802 to a value of 15, most DOS's default to 3 for two drives. After the correct value is placed into location 1802 then DOS is reinitialized and will now address four drives. Once a drive is selected it will begin to format.

When you are done formatting all of your disks, pressing the space bar will exit you from the program setting your system back to the original number of on-line drives set by your DOS originally. This is done by retaining the value of 1802 when booted and poking it back in the same way we did to change it the first time.

This program will load in one third the time it takes to load DUP.SYS and will format disks in what ever density you have your drives set to. If you have any questions on this program you may contact me by way of The Baudville BBS (313)-525-5172

```
100 REM The Formatter Rev. 2.1
        One keystroke formatting
      .. with auto drive config.
102 REM by Mike Mitchell 10/9/85
105 VA=PEEK(1802):VB=VA:IF VB<>15 THEN
  VB=15:GOSUB 310
110 GOSUB 300:DIM DRIV$(2):MAIN=140:FM
AT=254
140 POKE 710,148:POKE 712,146
150 ? "[CLEAR]":POSITION 1,1:? "[T][36
-R][T]"
152 POSITION 12,2:? "The Formatter!"
154 POSITION 1,3:? "[T][36-R][T]"
155 POSITION 2,20:? "WARNING Once a dr
ive is selected it   will start  forma
tting!"
157 POSITION 2,6:? "Which drive to for
mat (1-4)?"
158 POSITION 2,18:? "Press SPACE BAR t
o Exit!"
159 POKE 764,255
160 DR=PEEK(764)
161 IF DR=255 THEN 160
162 IF DR=31 THEN DRIV$="D1":GOTO 200
163 IF DR=30 THEN DRIV$="D2":GOTO 200
164 IF DR=26 THEN DRIV$="D3":GOTO 200
165 IF DR=24 THEN DRIV$="D4":GOTO 200
166 IF DR=33 THEN ? "[CLEAR]":POKE 752
,0:POKE 710,148:POKE 712,0:POKE 764,25
5:VB=VA:GOSUB 310:NEW
168 GOTO 160
199 GOTO MAIN
200 POKE 710,66:POKE 712,64
202 ? "[CLEAR]":POSITION 7,11:? "Now f
ormatting drive #";DRIV$(2,2)
205 TRAP 250:XIO FMAT,#1,0,0,DRIV$
208 POKE 710,148:POKE 712,146
210 ? "[CLEAR][BELL]":POSITION 3,11:?
"Formatting complete in drive #";DRIV$
(2,2)
220 FOR DE=1 TO 500:NEXT DE:GOTO MAIN
250 TRAP 40000:? "[CLEAR][BELL][BELL]"
:POSITION 6,11:? "Drive #";DRIV$(2,2);
" is not responding!":FOR DE=1 TO 500:
NEXT DE
255 GOTO MAIN
300 POKE 752,1:POKE 77,0
305 POKE 16,64:POKE 53774,64:RETURN
310 POKE 1802,VB:POKE 1536,104:POKE 15
37,108:POKE 1538,12:POKE 1539,0
315 X=USR(1536):RETURN
```

ATARIMUSIC SIG NEWS

The AtariMusic Sig, after taking the summer off, is looking for new members as well as a chairperson. If you are interested in joining or taking on the position, call either Leo LeBron at 838-4102, or reach Mike Lechkun on the MACE-Warren BBS (978-1685). Only an interest in music and Atari computers is required for membership!

ATARI SPEAKS

[The following are exerpts from a recent on-line conference held on CompuServe]

SYSOP*RON: Who's present from Atari Corp.?
ATARI: Leonard [Tramiel], Shiraz, & Neil
SYSOP*RON: Before we begin the user questions, does Atari have any preliminary statements they'd like to make?
ATARI:
SYSOP*RON: I guess not. Okay.

JEZ SAN (UK): Are there new versions of AS68 & LINK68 planned without bugs?
ATARI: Yes.
JEZ SAN (UK): can you elaborate on when we can get our paws on them?
ATARI) No.

CZECH: I've heard that the failure rate for the ST'S is 30%. Is this true and is Atari going to have service contracts ever again?
ATARI: The failure rate is not 30%, and service contracts may be offered in the future.

STEPHEN R. JONES: Can you elaborate on the status of GemWrite, Basic, STWriter and IconEditor?
ATARI: BASIC was released to production. GemWrite is under development by a third party, ST Writer will be released shortly.

MICROPROSE SOFTWARE: Atari, can you comment on the level of support you're getting from DRI on GEM and its components, and do you think you will get better support with a different OS like BOS?
ATARI: We are getting very good support from DRI on every question we ask them. BOS is not an alternative operating system, it is a shell.

MIKE TANCSA: What ever happened to the expansion box that was mentioned back in July...was it real, or just a good idea?
ATARI: The 32-bit computer that was mentioned is still under development. It will probably ship in April of 1986.
MIKE TANCSA: Does that mean no expansion for the ST?
ATARI: The expansion through the DMA channel consists of essentially a box that allows you to plug in up to 8 devices at once.

JEFF BOEHM: I've heard "rumors" about a PC capability. Comment? Price/date of the Fat program [640 X 400 color res?]
ATARI: PC compatibility is being developed by third parties. The ROM upgrade will be available before the end of the year. Neochrome has been released to disk reproduction -- this is the current program that was known as "Fat" -- it is being made available to ST users at no charge...

NORRIS KLESMAN: Will the ST be the "low end" computer sold by AT&T [?] and what is the expected price? Is Atari or anyone else looking into an 800 simulator to allow 8-byte users like me and the ol' 800 to allow business data to be transferred and used on the ST?
ATARI: We have no comment at this time regarding AT&T. An 800 simulator is something that we are currently considering.

GEORGE KENNEY: We are a dealer (ST) in Florida; when will we see Basic, hard disk? We have had failures with PS for DSDD.
ATARI: We will have the basic disk reproduced, the manual printed, and the package sent to all ST dealers as fast as we can -- it will most likely ship next week. I assume you are having a power supply problem -- we have not had an abnormally high failure rate on those. Please contact Atari Service.

GARY/ANTIC: What are your plans re marketing/pricing for ST Writer and Neo? Will they be packouts (with basic)? Or will they be distributed free to users groups? Want to answer that first?
ATARI: Distributing free to dealers, distributors, reps, and to the user groups who participated in the ST rollout program. We are encouraging those parties to make free copies for other ST users. They will not be packed out with the new ST's (Basic will be packed out).
GARY/ANTIC: Just one more quick one: how many officially-sanctioned ST developers out there currently have developers packages?
ATARI: We do not sanction developers -- 900 development packages have been sold to date.

CRAIG COLLINS: Will Atari develop a DOS like the 2.5 that will be able to be used on DD drives and still use the ramdisk programs?

ATARI: To repeat -- the DOS 2.5 was designed to support the 1050 drive only.

CURT EDDINGTON: My question is why doesn't Atari advertise the fact to gain the recognition deserves...a page ad in ANTIC or ANALOG does not an advertising campaign make.
ATARI: Atari has been advertising in many major magazines, such as SCIENCE '85 and Rolling Stone (not to mention Macworld & PC World). We have radio ads running in some selected areas; newspaper ads have appeared, too.

LANCE: Does Atari have any plans to bolster third party support for its 8-bits in the wake of dwindling support?
ATARI: Atari is continuing to release new software and hardware products for the 8-bit line. New products are also coming out for this line from third parties. We are continuing to sell these computers to ensure that third parties have an expanding market base for them. We are pushing the 130XE -- we are releasing 5 software products, 2 hardware products, and are making system packages very attractive to the distribution system. The ST architecture can support much more than 512K of ram.

MICHAEL GILBERT: When will GemPaint and GemDraw be released and what is the difference?
ATARI: Paint programs manipulate pixels on a screen. Draw programs manipulate graphic objects. Release dates on third party software cannot be given by Atari.

MICROPROSE SOFTWARE: Does Atari plan to prepare a list of available software for the ST the way Apple did for the MAC and the IIe/IIc to drum up business for the new models by letting customers know what the system can run? (if so, where do you sign up?)
ATARI: There is a dealer newsletter put out by Atari which lists new software received in each issue and which features a list of all known ST products in the very next issue. This list is also available through the ATARI BASE BBS (408) 745-5308. We hope our dealers keep the public informed of the products.

G. FAVROT: When using the command processor on the ST, is there any way to echo output to the printer, eg. for debugging? If not, how can this be fixed?
ATARI: You can redirect output to the printer using SID from the command processor.
G. FAVROT: How? What about disassembly?
ATARI: Type SID PROGRAMNAME > AUX: for the RS232 port

KEITH LEDBETTER: Has Atari kicked around any ideas of some type of incentives for all of the thousands of 800/800XL owners to get that vast market to upgrade to the 520 ST?
ATARI: We have Atari technical representatives here ... that should go to the marketing dept.

TOM WRIGHT: Why no support for 8-bit double density and which OS does the 130 XE have, 800's or 800XL's?
ATARI: The 130XE has the same OS as the 800XL, modified to self-test 128K of ram. A double density drive is under consideration.

YM: Now that the 850 seems truely extinct, are there any plans for an RS-232 for the 130 XE?
ATARI: Not at this time, but it is still under consideration.

CZECH: When is the release date for ST Planetarium, ST 1200 Modem, and, will it be possible to ever have color for 640*400?
ATARI: ST Planetarium should be done in 2 months. A 1200 baud modem should ship next April...the current ST supports 640X400 in monochrome (non-interlaced) only.

TIM BARR: I would like to know if it is true that the video chip in the ST can actually display 16 colors in medium res, but the GEM OS is kept to 4 colors to be compatible with the IBM PC?
ATARI: The IBM PC in medium res (640X200) is monochrome when using GEM. The ST in 640X200 mode can display 4 colors.

SYSOP*RON: Before we say g'nite, does Atari have any statements or announcements you'd like to make?
ATARI: We would like to thank everyone for your interest and your support. Please continue to leave questions here and on our BBS -- (408) 745-5308.

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Assembly Language Course

FOR WORLDWIDE USERS NETWORK

By Chris Crawford

Lecture Five
INDEX REGISTERS & LOOPING

We are now going to expand the model of the 6502 that you have been using. Until now, the 6502 I have described had nothing more than a status register, program counter, and accumulator. Now I am going to reveal the existance of two new registers in the 6502: the X- and Y- registers.

These two registers are eight-bit registers just like the accumulator. You can load numbers into them and store them out just as you can with the accumulator. You cannot do arithmetic or boolean operations with them as you can with the accumulator. But you can do a number of very special things that greatly increase the power of the 6502.

Let's start with the simple move instructions. The first are LDX and LDY, which load the X- and Y- registers the same way that LDA loads the accumulator. Then there are STX and STY, which store the X- and Y- registers the same way that STA stores the accumulator. There are also four commands for transferring bytes between registers; these are TAX (Transfer A to X), TAY (Transfer A to Y), TXA (Transfer A to Y), and TYA (Transfer Y to A).

Then there are four special instructions that you will use very often. These are INX and INY, which increment (add one to) the X- and Y- registers, and DEX and DEY, which decrement (subtract one from) the X- and Y- registers.

Finally, we have the CPX and CPY commands, which compare X or Y with the operand of the instruction. These two instructions operate in exactly the same way that the CMP instruction works, except that they use the X- and Y- registers instead of the accumulator.

What are these two registers used for? Well, they are sometimes used as temporary registers. If you are in the middle of a lengthy computation, and you need to save a value currently in the accumulator to make room for something else, the X- and Y- registers are a handy place to stuff values away for temporary storage. Programmers do this all the time.

However, temporary storage is not the real purpose and their value arises from their utility as index registers. Index registers go hand in hand with loops; the best way to show you how they are used is to dump the whole schmeer at once and then explain it.

So consider the following problem: your program has to deal with the possibility of user errors. Suppose you require the user to type in a file name for your program to read. What happens if this file in not on the disk? You have to put an error message on the screen that says, "FILE NOT ON DISK!" How do you print the message? Here's a sample bit of code that will do it:

```
LDX  #(ENDMSG-ERRMSG-1)
LOOP1 LDA  ERRMSG,X
STA  SCREEN,X
SEC
SBC  #$20
DEX
BPL  LOOP1
JMP  ELSWHR
ERRMSG DB  'FILE NOT ON DISK1'
ENDMSG DS  1
```

Let's take apart this code and explain it step by step. First thing we do is load the X-register with the number of characters (minus one) in the message. The expression (ENDMSG-ERRMSG-1) will calculate that length at assembly time. This turns out to be 17 characters long. If we were pedestrian about it, we could have just written LDX #16, but this way, if we decide to change the message we don't have to remember to go back and change the LDX command. Neat, huh?

OK, so now we have a 16 in the X-register. Now the 6502 comes to the next command -- LDA, ERRMSG,X. This command tells it to load the accumulator with the byte at (address

ERRMSG, INDEXED BY X). What this means is as follows: the 6502 will take the address ERRMSG and add the value of the X-register to that address. It will then go to the address so calculated and load the accumulator with the contents of that address. Since X contains a 16, the 6502 will go to the 16th byte after the first byte in the table ERRMSG. If you count characters, you will see that the 16th byte is the exclamation point. So the 6502 will load the ASCII code for an exclamation point into the accumulator.

The next two instructions (SEC, SBC #$20) are necessary to correct for the Atari's nonstandard handling of ASCII codes. They make sure that the exclamation will be printed on the screen as an exclamation point.

The next instruction (STA SCREEN,X) stores the result indexes by X. The 6502 will add the contents of X (still 16) to the address screen. It will then store the contents of the accumulator into that address. If that address is part of screen RAM, then you will see an exclamation point appear on the screen.

The next instruction that the 6502 encounters is the DEX instruction. This instruction subtracts one from the X-register, making it a 15.

Next, the 6502 comes to the instruction BPL, LOOP 1. This will branch if the N-FLAG is clear. The value of the N-FLAG is affected by a DEX instruction. The value of bit D7 of the result is transferred to the N-FLAG. Bit DD7 of 15 is a zero, hence the N-FLAG is clear, hence the 6502 will indeed take the branch. Note that it branches back up to LOOP 1.

Now it will repeat the process, only this time X contains a 15, not a 16. It will therefore grab the 15th character, an ASCII 'K', and store that to the screen position just before the exclamation point. Then it will subtract one from X to get a 14, and will continur the loop.

This process will continue, with the 6502 grabbing bytes in reverse order from the table and storing them onto the screen, until after the 6502 does the zeroth byte. When X contains a zero, and the 6502 executes a DEX, it obtains the result $FF. This sets the N-FLAG. When the 6502 encounters the BPL command, it will not take the branch; instead, it will skip the branch and go on to the JMP statement. The loop is terminated.

In this one fragment of code, upi jave seen two major ideas: indexed addressing and looping. They are so closely related that it is hard to talk about one without talking about the other.

You can use indexed addressing with either the X-register or the Y-register. You most commonly use indexed addressing with the LDA and STA commands, but you can also use it with many of the other 6502 commands: ADC, SBC, CMP, AND, ORA, EOR, LSR, ROR, ADL, and ROL can all be used with indexed addressing. Indexed addressing allows you to work with tables or arrays of data.

There is one ugly catch: all of your arrays must be less than 257 bytes long, because the index registers are only eight bits wide. Most of the time this is not a serious problem. However, if you must address a larger table or array, you can use indirect addressing. To do this, you calculate the address that you desire to access, store that address in two contiguous bytes on page zero (low, then high) -- we call these two bytes a pointer -- and then refer to the pointer like so:

```
LDA  (POINTER), Y
```

This instruction will take the address out of pointer, add the value of Y to it, and load the accumulator with the contents of the address so calculated. If POINTER contains $4567 and Y contains a 2, then the 6502 will load the accumulator with the contents of address $4569. You are still restricted by the size of Y, but you can always go back and change the pointer if you need to span larger arrays. In this case, you frequently just leave Y equal to zero and do all of your indexing directly with changes to POINTER.

The last topic I will take up is termination techniques. Every loop must somehow be terminated if you are to avoid the problem of the Sorcerer's Apprentice. You will note that the programming example I gave used a rather odd approach. I started at the end of the array and worked backwards. Why not start at the beginning and word forwards? It's

slightly more efficient going backwards than forwards. When you go forwards, you have to terminate the loop with:

```
INX
CPX  #17
BNE  LOOP1
```

Whereas when you go backwards, you need only use:

```
DEX
BPL  LOOP1
```

Going backwards you save one instruction. However, if this confuses you, feel free to count forward; that works, too, only it's a little less efficient.

There are lots of other sneaky ways to terminate loops, but they fall into advanced topics.

KENNEDY APPROACH Revisited

Reviewed by P.R.Wheeler

Ms. Paula Myers, Public Relations Manager of MicroProse, replied to my review of Kennedy Approach (in last month's Journal) with the following:

SLOW TO LOAD -- To produce the high-quality speech requires a very large amount of data. KENNEDY APPROACH is approximately 70K. As a result, with the restricted speed of the Atari disk drive and serial bus, the program takes a long time to load. But isn't quality software worth waiting a few minutes for?
[ANS: Two minutes to load and coupled with the wrong accesses, can build up to five minutes before the game can start. I still say it's SLOW.]

COPYGUARDS -- Yes, the program protection code takes approximately 2 seconds and should produce no abnormal sounds on the disk drive. Obviously, the wrong conclusion has been jumped to here.
[ANS: A matter of opinion. The notices of HARDWARE FAILURE after the glups-glups noises of the drives, add to the load times.]

ACCESS CODES -- Two of the access codes were typoed in the manual. This has been corrected in the production run. Reviewers were given early copies according to their leadtimes and deadlines.
[ANS: I assumed my copy was a production copy since I paid the full price for it. Since I get the wrong access codes I wished Paula had included the correct ones in her letter.]

LOCK UPS -- KENNEDY APPROACH was subjected to hundreds of hours of play-testing and such a problem never surfaced. It is very probable that you have an intermittent hardware problem with your computer. The program uses every bit of memory in the machine, including areas unused by most other programs on this computer. You still may have a hardware problem.
[ANS: I didn't do hundreds of hours of play testing but the lock-ups have occurred on too many occasions for me to pass this off, especially since I have had it occur on my 800, 800XL, and 130XE machines, my 810 and Indus drives and combination of this equipment. I do not believe I have a hardware problem.]

Ms. Myers ended her letter as follows: "In conclusion, we appreciate you allowing us to respond to your comments. The sound, graphics and game-play of KENNEDY APPROACH are unique and meet every high standard that customers expect from our valued line of products. It is clear to us that your observations were drawn from a quick appraisal, not a fair review.
[ANS: As I mentioned in my review, it is a fascinating game with good graphics, sound, etc. and extremely fun to play. Giving this program better than two months of testing can hardly be classified as a quick appraisal.

In my own conclusion I will just say that it is quite possible I got a bad copy and I reviewed it as fairly as I could. If MicroProse would like to furnish me a replacement I will be glad to make another review. At least send me the correct ACCESS codes.]

PRW

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SYNFILE+
by Synapse

Reviewed by Ann McBain Ezzell

One of the more "useful" things your computer can do for you is to help you keep track of things: your record collection, people who owe you money, or your library of first edition comic books. To keep track of more than a few items, you need a database management program - an organizational tool which will maintain your records in a way that allows you to recall or update one or more records at will. Synfile+ from Synapse, while perhaps not living up to its billing as "The Ultimate Filing System", will certainly meet the needs of most users in search of an easy-to-use and reasonably powerful database manager.

Synfile+ requires 48K of RAM and will run on XL/XE machines without a translator. It comes on a double-sided copy-protected disk containing the database program and a detailed tutorial. There is also a 100+ page manual which includes a fold-out reference card and an index. The manual is written at a level appropriate for the absolute beginner; it dedicates four pages to "What You Will Need", "The ATARI Keyboard", "A Word on Diskettes", and other high-tech subjects. The rest of the manual is equally detailed, with a few omissions that I found surprising. For example, the manual says that you must use the Control key in conjunction with the arrow keys to move the cursor; it doesn't mention that you can also move the cursor with the arrow keys alone. It also fails to mention that, in order to use a second drive for the few functions which support a second drive, that drive must be turned on when you first load the program. I made several unsuccessful attempts to copy to drive #2 before I accidentally discovered this secret.

Fortunately for Synapse, the program is more professional than its documentation. Synfile+ gives you an 80 column by 21 row form which can be filled however you choose with eleven different field types (some examples are: text, numeric, date, dollar, and computed). The fields can be moved around within the form; you can also change the field name, type or length. After a form has been created, you can still edit it should you wish. This is especially useful for a neophyte database user; I went through several versions of my first form before I found the proper combination of field types and lengths.

Synfile+ maintains your records in order according to index fields (in ascending or descending order) which you specify. Up to 16 fields can be used for indexing, and you can re-index a form at any time after creation should you wish to re-order your records.

Entering records is as simple as typing the information into the form displayed on the screen. Errors can be corrected at any time during data entry; you can also recall a record and change previous entries. The "look-up" field type facilitates entries by allowing you to set up a table of standard entries (state abbreviations, for example) which will appear on the screen in rotation when you press the Atari logo/inverse video key. When you specify this field type, you may also enter from the keyboard, but your entry must match one in the table. Synfile+ checks each entry and rejects any which do not match the chosen field type (a text entry in a numeric field, for example).

While a record is on the screen, you can press the OPTION key to access a sub-menu which allows you to send the information to the printer, preview any calculated fields, or delete the record.

Ease of entry is important, of course, but the strength of a database lies in its ability to search through your records and retrieve specific information. Synfile+ lets you search on up to 16 fields, finding records which meet all or any of the criteria. Fastest retrieval occurs when you are searching on an indexed field; otherwise the program must read through the database record by record until it finds a match. In addition to searching for specific matches, you can search for a range of values (less than or equal to, greater than or equal to, or not equal to). You can also use an asterisk (*) as a "wildcard" when searching for strings: "*ace" would match "Mace", "space", and "race".

Once you have retrieved a record using the search function, you can change it by typing in new information over the old. You can also

automatically change a record or set of records with the update function, which allows you to enter search criteria and replacement data. Sets of records can be deleted by choosing the "Delete All" function and specifying search criteria.

Synfile+ gives you two somewhat limited options for printing reports: Lists and Labels. The Lists option will output selected information in columnar form, with field names printed at the top of each column. Up to 40 columns (not exceeding 232 characters) can be output to either disk drive or the printer. You can specify a title which will appear at the beginning of the first page.

The Labels option generates free-format "reports" which are set up on an 80 by 21 screen. You enter up to 32 field names in whatever order you desire, then you can specify the number of labels to be printed across the page (1-32), location of the left margin, number of blank lines between labels, and number of columns between labels. Adjacent fields can be concatenated with a comma and a space or just a space. Reports can be output to disk, printer or screen. This option is most useful for printing mailing labels, but reports generated with this option can be merged with AtariWriter, Writer's Tool, or any other word processor which supports Mail Merge with ATASCII files.

Synfile includes some utility routines which allow sharing of information with SynCalc, Visicalc, and SynTrend. There are also file utilities which support copying of files with one or two disk drives, creation of a subset database, combination of two datafiles with identical or similar field names, renaming or deletion of files, formatting of disks, and selection of disk drive density.

Synfile+ could be used for anything from keeping a personal mailing list to maintaining records for a small business. When used with a compatible word processor, it can be a powerful addition to your software library. The manual and tutorial are detailed and elementary enough for beginners; the program is powerful enough for experienced and demanding users.

SmarTEAM 300/1200 Modem

by Mike Mitchell
and Sharie Middlebrook

Just another new modem on the market? Another modem claiming to be compatible with the industries standard Hayes Smartmodem? Sadly enough, all so-called "Hayes compatible" modems have fallen short of this claim. Now, the newcomer, the SmarTEAM 103/212A, has come to challenge the leader.

After discussing this modem with ICD, Inc., the people who brought you the US Doubler for your 1050, we were frankly skeptical of the claims of Hayes compatibility. We were provided a SmarTEAM modem for testing by ICD.

Since we both use Hayes 1200 modems, and have tested many others, we firmly believed that the only truly Hayes compatible modem was another Hayes. We fully expected this new modem to fall short of its claims. When we learned that the cost would only be $219, we were sure we had found another modem that would stand in the shadow of a Hayes.

When the SmarTEAM arrived, we were both surprised to see how similar it appeared to a Hayes. It had all the same indicator lights on the front panel. It even had the dipswitches behind the front panel. The built-in speaker, volume control, and on-off switch were all in the same places. This modem looked like a Hayes right down to the silver metal case.

Being cynics, we decided to start off with an easy first test. We connected the SmarTEAM to an 850-interface with a standard Hayes cable and booted up AMODEM 4.2. We called each other's bulletin boards, uploading, downloading, capturing texts, and leaving messages at both 300 and 1200 bps. We used the autodial. We dialed manually. We tried everything associated with Amodem 4.2 and found that the SmarTEAM performed with the excellence of a Hayes.

We then tried using this modem with a variety of other terminal programs including Amodem 7.1 (with SpartaDOS) and Hometerm. Every one of these programs performed as well as Amodem 4.2 with the new SmarTEAM modem. By this point, any other modem enthusiast would have been convinced that the modem was truly Hayes compatible. But we told you we were cynics.

We were growing desperate to find a flaw (any flaw) in this modem. We decided to put the SmarTEAM modem to the supreme test: running our bulletin boards. We simply set the dipswitches on the SmarTeam to match those on our Hayes. We then connected it to the board using the same non-standard cable constructed for the Hayes and our AMIS program. Everything worked, and none of our callers noticed any difference in the operation of the board between the two modems.

This modem is the first truly Hayes compatible modem that we have ever found. The SmarTEAM was so compatible that the unit sent for testing was never returned but bought by one of us. At less than half the cost of a Hayes, the SmarTEAM 103/212A is truly well worth the money. Special thanks to Tom Harker of ICD, Inc. for allowing us the opportunity to test this modem.

M. A. C. E. Monthly General Meeting

October 22, 1985

President Alva Thomas called the meeting to order at 7:31 PM at the Southfield Civic Center Pavillion room.

Officer reports to the general membership were presented:
President Alva Thomas put forth some general policy statements concerning how MACE would be run for the next year. He proposed a system of six bulletin boards in areas that serve a majority of MACE members. Of those six, one would serve as a flagship BBS, complete with an "800" number for Michigan, and with state-of-the art equipment, such as hard drives, etc. Alva also stated that there will no longer be "private" access areas on the boards for any reasons whatsoever. Alva asked the membership for anyone who could just steer us in the proper direction for getting tax help. Alva also mentioned that Jim Steinbrecher of Sector One International was starting an ST Sig to be run out of his business.
Mike Landis mentioned that the remainder of the tape library would be given away to members. His table was immediately swamped!
Burt Gregory clarified our current status for those who may have missed it at the last meeting; we are currently a not-for-profit (taxable) corporation.
Scott Garland mentioned that meetings would run around 90 minutes from now on and there would be no break (as per a vote by the membership earlier this year). We need people to get up and demonstrate software, hardware or anything.

Because of prior commitments, Mike Schiffer resigned as Journal editor. Nominations were opened for the office of MACE Journal editor. Alva Thomas nominated Mike Lechkun. A second was noted, and nominations were closed by motion and second. Mike was elected unanimously by those in attendance. Nominations were then accepted for the position of Recording Secretary (the position that Mike Lechkun vacated). Burt brought up that the person nominated should be of legal age. Barbara Franczyk was nominated "in absentia", and a second was recognized.

Nominations were closed by motion and second. Barbara was elected unanimously by those in attendance.

Alva spoke of a new feature he wanted to see incorporated into MACE. The MACE Challenge would be a game or adventure selected, a high score or goal would be set, and MACE members would have the month following the meeting to break or surpass the set score.

Mike Schiffer demonstrated Seven Cities of Gold to the membership.

Mike Lechkun demonstrated the Atari Touch Tablet to the membership, and entertained questions afterwards.

Alva Thomas then opened the meeting up to the membership for questions and answers. Questions arose about AtariWriter, the ST's and the rumoured new "TT" 32 bit computer. Tom Sturza also brought up that the New User's SIG was still meeting on the fourth Monday of the month upstairs at the Civic Center.

The meeting was adjourned around 9:15 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mike Lechkun, Acting Secretary

M. A. C. E.
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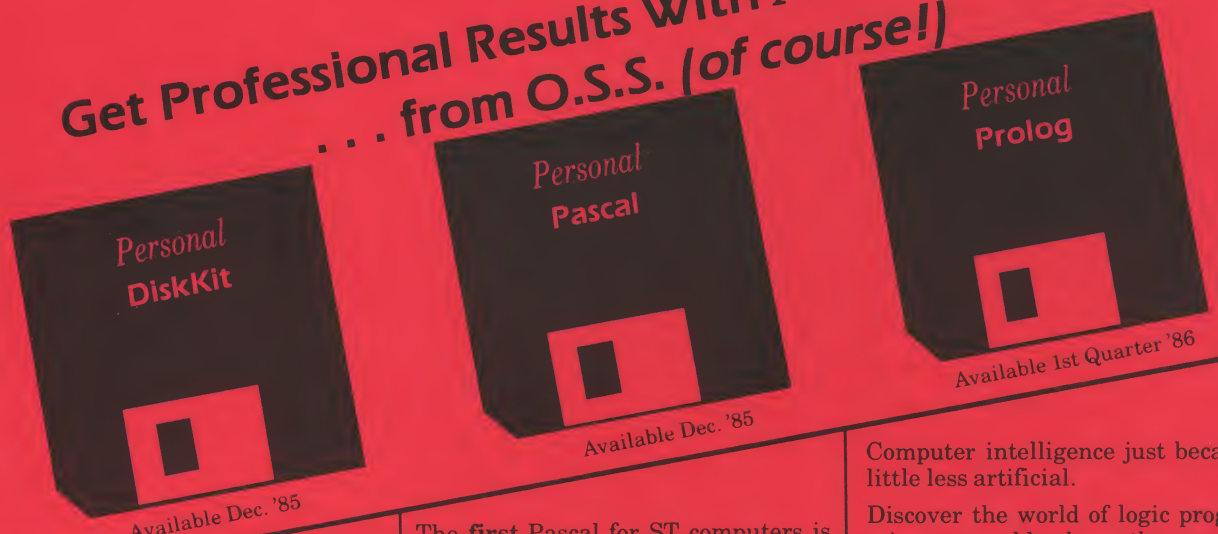

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